

# Dracophyllum pearsonii

## FAMILY

Ericaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Dracophyllum pearsonii* Kirk

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## NVS CODE

DRAPEA

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, Sp

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Not Threatened

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Low-growing brownish spreading grassy shrub with short erect branches bearing very dense tufts of both alive and dead narrow pointed leaves mainly inhabiting upland Stewart Island (rare in Fiordland). Leaves hard, 19-32mm long by 0.8-1.5mm wide. Flowers mixed in with leaves, white, tubular.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South (Fiordland National Park - scarce) and Stewart Islands. On Stewart Island restricted to the tops of Mt Anglem and Rakeahua

## HABITAT

Montane to alpine. Usually colonising open sites on mountain slopes, ridges and plateau within subalpine shrubland, herbfield or grassland



## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Multi-stemmed shrub 0.3–0.5 m tall. Branches: bark on old branches dark grey, deeply fissured, young stems reddish brown. Leaves spirally arranged along branches, imbricate, appressed to stem, dry old leaves present; lamina sheath olive green to light brown, 4–7 × 3–5 mm, coriaceous, striate, shoulders rounded to truncate with margins membranous, ciliate or with only the top half ciliate; lamina rigid and hard, 19.0–32.0 × 0.8–1.5 mm, mid to olive green, linear to linear-subulate, adaxial surface flat, abaxial surface keeled, margins serrulate with 90–100 teeth per 10 mm, apex triquetrous. Inflorescence a few flowered spike near apices of branches; shorter than leaves, erect, lax, 12–20 mm long, oblong. Inflorescence bract over-topping flowers, foliose, coriaceous, 6.0–6.5 × 4–5 mm, linear, ovate-lanceolate at base, surfaces glabrous with a tuft of scabrid hairs at base of adaxial surface, margins ciliate. Flowers 3–6, sessile; flower bracts over-topping flowers, leaf like, linear, 6.0–6.5 × 4–5 mm, with a tuft of scabrid hairs at base of adaxial surface, margins ciliate. Sepals 4.2–4.5 × 1.5–2.0 mm, lanceolate to ovate-lanceolate, shorter to equaling corolla tube; margins ciliate. Corolla white; corolla tube 4.2–4.5 × 1.8–2.0 mm, cylindrical; corolla lobes reflexed, 1.9–2.0 × 1.4–1.5 mm, ovate-triangular to broadly triangular, shorter than corolla tube, apical ridge present, apices inflexed at tip, subacute; adaxial surface papillate. Stamens inserted on corolla tube near the top, filaments 0.2–0.5 mm long; anthers included, 0.8 mm long, oblong, light yellow. Ovary 1.9–2.0 × 1.8–2.0 mm, globose, apex round; nectary scales oblong, 1.0–1.2 × 0.8–1.0 mm, apices obtuse; style included, 0.8–1.0 mm long, glabrous; stigma five-lobed. Fruit light brown, 1.0–1.5 × 1.0–1.2 mm, obovoid, apex truncate, glabrous. Seeds 0.55–0.6 mm long, yellowish brown, ovoid, testa slightly reticulate.

## SIMILAR TAXA

*Dracophyllum pearsonii* is easily recognised by the closely imbricate strongly keeled leaves with triquetrous apices. Characteristically the leaves densely cover the branches and when dead they are long persistent. In this species the flowers are arranged in few-flowered (3–6-flowered) racemes near the ends of branches, also each petal is furnished with a prominent apical ridge on the upper surface.

## FLOWERING

December - February

## FRUITING

February - April

## LIFE CYCLE

Minute seeds are wind dispersed (Thorsen et al., 2009).

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Should not be removed from the wild.

## THREATS

*Dracophyllum pearsonii* is listed because it is a narrow range endemic virtually confined to Stewart island (it is scarce in its only known stations in Fiordland National Park). Despite its small area of occupancy it is otherwise believed secure and under no active threat.

## ETYMOLOGY

**dracophyllum:** Dragon leaf, from its likeness to the dragon tree of the Canary Islands

**pearsonii:** After Pearson

## WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (16 April 2012). Description adapted from Venter (2009)

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Venter, S. 2009: A taxonomic revision of the genus *Dracophyllum* Labill. (Ericaceae). Unpublished Phd Thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington.

Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285–309

### **NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION**

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Dracophyllum pearsonii* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network.

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/dracophyllum-pearsonii/> (Date website was queried)

### **MORE INFORMATION**

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/dracophyllum-pearsonii/>